(c) if so, by when it would be made the same; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) There was only one AC 3-tier coach running in 4308 Bareilly-Mughalsarai Express which has been withdrawn *w.e.f.* 21.07.2006 due to poor patronization.

(b) and (c) There is no proposal to make this train an Express train between Lucknow and Mughalsarai.

(d) The train runs as passenger service for daily passengers between Lucknow-Mughalsarai.

Automatic ticketing machines at stations in Mumbai

918. SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether 350 automatic ticketing machines installed and operationalised from 1st January, 2008 on Mumbai city's Western and Central railway lines;

(b) whether Mumbai is in the first phase;

(c) whether German and Australian companies have agreed to supply these machines free of cost;

(d) if so, whether railways have agreed to install it in other cities like Delhi and Chennai after its successful operation;

(e) whether by installation, railways would be saving to the tune of Rs.1.5 lakh for the price of the each 350 machines in Mumbai; and

(f) if so, to what extent it has been working successfully in Mumbai?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) So far, 243 Automatic Ticketing Vending Machines have been installed and operationalised on the suburban stations of Mumbai city's Western and Central Railways. Only 300 Automatic Ticketing Vending Machines are sanctioned for Mumbai area.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) No, Sir. There is no proposal from German and Australian companies to supply Automatic Ticketing Vending Machines free of cost. However, 450 Automatic Ticketing Vending Machines are planned for installation in other cities like Delhi and Chennai through Railway funding.

(e) The saving to the Railways does not arise in view of reply to (c) and (d) above as these machines have been procured through Railway Fund.

(f) All the Automatic Ticket Vending Machines functional at Mumbai are working satisfactorily. On an average 36,000 passengers avail this facility daily.

Corruption in awarding railway contracts

919. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:
SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:
SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that officials in Indian Railway Board and Zonal Railways accepted bribes worth lakhs of rupees to provide contracts to Kolkata based Pioneer Friction Limited as reported in print media on 16th February, 2008;

(b) if so, the facts and details thereof;

(c) whether transparency does not exist in awarding railway contracts to private/foreign companies;

(d) if so, whether an inquiry would be conducted and involved officials be held responsible; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, a news item was reported in 'The Statesman' dated 16th February, 2008. The news item mentioned that between 2001 and 2005, officials in the Indian Railway Board and Zonal Railways accepted bribes of at least $ 137,200 (about Rs. 55 lakh) to provide contracts for procurement of high friction composite brake blocks to Kolkata based Pioneer Friction Ltd., a subsidiary of Westinghouse Air Brake Technologies Corporation (Wabtec), USA. The Newspaper further reported that Wabtec acknowledged to US Justice Department of such improper payments.

(c) to (e) No, Sir. Transparency does exist. The allegations reported in the news item are being investigated by the Departmental Vigilance.

Funds for rail projects of Andhra Pradesh

920. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry had received the proposal from Andhra Pradesh Government for enhancing the allocation of funds in the Railway Budget, 2007-08 in favour of some on-going railway projects;

(b) if so, the complete details of each such proposal;

(c) the amount of allocations enhanced for each of these on-going projects indicating the status of progress made on each of these projects;

(d) if fund allocations have not been increased, the reasons therefor; and

(e) by when these projects are likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Two letters dt. 7.12.2007 & 10.1.2008 respectively have been received from Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh for allocation of sufficient funds for the construction of new lines between Kotipalli-Narsapur, Nandyal-Yerraguntla, Kakinada-Pithapuram, Macherla-Nalgonda, Munirabad-Mahaboobnagar and Gadwal-Raichur.

(c) The details of funds allocated to the mentioned Projects are as under:—

Name of the Project	Budget Outlay 2008-09 (Rs. in Crore)	Current Status
1	2	3
Nandyal-Yerraguntla (126 km.)	35.00	656 hectare out of 680 hectare land has been acquired and earthwork, bridge work, ballast collection has been taken up.